

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An isolated nucleic acid encoding a mammalian protein selected from the group consisting of LGR4, LGR5 or LGR7.

2. An isolated nucleic acid according to Claim 1, wherein said mammalian protein has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:04, SEQ ID NO:06 or SEQ ID NO:08.

3. An isolated nucleic acid according to Claim 1, wherein said mammalian protein has an amino acid sequence that is substantially identical to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:04, SEQ ID NO:06 or SEQ ID NO:08.

4. An isolated nucleic acid according to Claim 1, wherein the nucleotide sequence of said nucleic acid has the sequence selected from the group consisting of: (a) SEQ ID NO:1 or the complementary sequence thereof; (b) SEQ ID NO:03 or the complementary sequence thereof; (c) SEQ ID NO:05 or the complementary sequence thereof; and (d) SEQ ID NO:07 or the complementary sequence thereof.

5. An isolated nucleic acid comprising at least 18 contiguous nucleotides of the sequence selected from the group consisting of: (a) SEQ ID NO:1 or the complementary sequence thereof; (b) SEQ ID NO:03 or the complementary sequence thereof; (c) SEQ ID NO:05 or the complementary sequence thereof; and (d) SEQ ID NO:07 or the complementary sequence thereof.

6. An isolated nucleic acid comprising at least 50 contiguous nucleotides of the sequence selected from the group consisting of: (a) SEQ ID NO:1 or the complementary sequence thereof; (b) SEQ ID NO:03 or the complementary sequence thereof; (c) SEQ ID NO:05 or the complementary sequence thereof; and (d) SEQ ID NO:07 or the complementary sequence thereof.

7. An isolated nucleic acid that hybridizes under stringent conditions to a nucleic acid having the nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of: (a) SEQ ID NO:1 or the complementary sequence thereof; (b) SEQ ID NO:03 or the complementary sequence thereof; (c) SEQ ID NO:05 or the complementary sequence thereof; and (d) SEQ ID NO:07 or the complementary sequence thereof.

8. An expression cassette comprising a transcriptional initiation region functional in an expression host, a nucleic acid having a sequence of the isolated nucleic acid according to Claim 1 under the transcriptional regulation of said transcriptional initiation region, and a transcriptional termination region functional in said expression host.

9. A cell comprising an expression cassette according to Claim 8 as part of an extrachromosomal element or integrated into the genome of a host cell as a result of introduction of said expression cassette into said host cell, and the cellular progeny of said host cell.

10. A method for producing a mammalian protein selected from the group consisting of LGR4, LGR5 and LGR7, said method comprising:
growing a cell according to Claim 9, whereby said mammalian protein is expressed; and
isolating said protein substantially free of other proteins.

11. A purified polypeptide composition comprising at least 50 weight % of the protein present as a mammalian protein selected from the group consisting of LGR4, LGR5 and LGR7, or a fragment thereof.

12. An antibody binding specifically to a mammalian protein selected from the group consisting of LGR4, LGR5 and LGR7.

13. The antibody of Claim 12, wherein said antibody is a monoclonal antibody.

14. A non-human transgenic animal model for *LGR4*, *LGR5* or *LGR7* gene function, wherein said transgenic animal comprises an introduced alteration in an *LGR4*,
5 *LGR5* or *LGR7* gene.

15. The animal model of claim 14, wherein said animal is heterozygous for said introduced alteration.

10 16. The animal model of claim 14, wherein said animal is homozygous for said introduced alteration.

17. The animal model of claim 14, wherein said introduced alteration is a knockout of endogenous *LGR4*, *LGR5* or *LGR7* gene expression.

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18. A method of screening a sample for the presence of a ligand for a receptor selected from the group consisting of *LGR4*, *LGR5* and *LGR7*, said method comprising:

contacting said sample with a receptor selected from the group consisting of *LGR4*, *LGR5* and *LGR7* or a mimetic thereof, and

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detecting the presence of a binding event between said receptor and ligand in said sample.